

ENCLOSURE AND THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF HILLESDEN

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*Hillesden, lying three miles south-west of Buckingham, falls within the area of 'classic' Midland open fields. The parish was enclosed in 1652, and this paper discusses Hillesden's landscape both before and after this watershed date, and its experience within the general context of seventeenth-century enclosure and particularly with that of its near neighbour, Middle Claydon.*¹

ENCLOSURE IN NORTH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Before 1500, arable agriculture in north Buckinghamshire was usually undertaken in common, or open, fields, but there is evidence that this practice was beginning to break down. Contemporary records of land use show the increasing use of individual furlong names over the open-field names; an indication, perhaps, of the decline of open fields.² At the end of the medieval period, corn remained predominant, but sheep-rearing was increasing to match the continuing importance of pastoral husbandry in neighbouring Northamptonshire.³ The returns to Cardinal Wolsey's enclosure commission of 1517 confirm this; in Buckinghamshire as a whole, 81.5% of the area enclosed was converted to pasture.⁴

The commission recorded that Buckinghamshire experienced more enclosure between 1488 and 1517 than any county bar Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire. It was concentrated in the period before 1500, when wool prices were still rising, but fell away in the first decade of the sixteenth century following a decline in wool prices.⁵ One of the major concerns of the commission was the displacement of people from the homes. Before 1500 9921 acres were enclosed or converted county-wide with 887 people displaced from their homes but, over the course of the next century, by 1607, in spite of the enclosure of another 7077 acres, only 86 people had been ejected.⁶ Although only contentious enclosures received the attention of the commissioners – almost all enclosure by agreement seems to have been missed – which renders the accuracy of the returns to the commissions doubtful, it would

appear that enclosure was continuing with fewer incidences of displacement.⁷

The sixteenth century had seen considerable opposition to large-scale enclosure and engrossing for conversion to pasture from arable, particularly in Warwickshire and Leicestershire. In the first instance, concerns about depopulation were uppermost but, by 1607, it was the increasing enclosure of commons, combined with dearth, which stimulated protest among the peasantry.⁸ In north Buckinghamshire, however, as much enclosure was carried out by smaller farmers, yeomen and husbandmen, as by landlords.⁹ Enclosures by agreement and the conversion of land for pastoral farming were seen as effective ways of overcoming the geographical drawbacks of an area remote from waterways. During the seventeenth century, agreements between the involved parties, sometimes ratified by the courts of Chancery or Exchequer, were the most important means of effecting enclosure. However, 'agreement' could mean anything from coercion to active participation in the enclosure.¹⁰

And so, the Vale of Aylesbury, from 1500 until the outbreak of the Civil War, was an area of mixed husbandry. Its reducing area of arable was still predominantly in traditional open fields, but sheep were already being kept within permanent closes; the breed chosen, Midland long wools, were particularly well-suited to enclosed fields, and were said to be the biggest and best in England.¹¹ One potential problem with keeping sheep in closes – the reduction in the ready manuring of the open fields – may not have affected arable yields unduly; according to James and Malcolm, writing in the *General view of the agriculture of the county of*

Buckingham in 1794, the county was able 'to produce good crops without the assistance of much manure'.¹² Pastoral farming made economic sense in an area from which the export of grain was made more difficult and expensive by the lack of a navigable river system.¹³

The enclosure of north Buckinghamshire followed the Midland pattern, differing from that of the southern part of the county, where agriculture was dominated by the very different Chiltern landscape.¹⁴ The enclosure of Middle Claydon, a parish close to Hillesden and whose chief family was allied to the Dentons of Hillesden by marriage, is well-documented in the substantial archive of family papers.¹⁵ It was completed between 1654 and 1656, and apparently without a formal document of agreement. The Verneys had bought up copyholds and freeholds all through the first half of the seventeenth century, eliminating all the freeholders by 1625 and replacing remaining copyhold tenures with ordinary leases for lives.¹⁶ These leases had a clause inserted giving the Verneys the right to enclose and to exchange land as they wished. By the mid-1650s, the Verneys' right to enclose had been established: it was carried through by a mixture of mild coercion, manipulation of the terms of tenure, and amicable agreement.¹⁷

The enclosure of Hillesden which, like that of Middle Claydon took place in the mid-1650s and without a formal document, would have left no documentary trace but for an eighteenth-century dispute between the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church and their tenant, Sir Alexander Denton, over tithes from the parish. In the course of the correspondence between Denton and Christ Church, it emerged that Alexander's ancestor had enclosed Hillesden in 1652 after the estates had been reclaimed from the Parliamentary sequestrators. Hillesden, which has many parallels with Middle Claydon, provides a case study of a seventeenth-century enclosure by agreement, taking place during the second of the two phases of pre-parliamentary enclosure in the south Midlands; the first in the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth, and the second 1575–1674.¹⁸

THE LANDSCAPE OF HILLESSEN BEFORE 1652 (Fig. 1)

Hillesden, a parish of some 2500 acres, is situated on the lower slopes of the Purbeck and Portland

Hills as they begin to rise out of the Vale of Aylesbury. The area is one of very heavy clay which is difficult to work. During much of the medieval period, arable farming was the norm; but, in the late medieval and early modern periods, the difficult soil and lack of easy transport by river, combined with the chance of increased profits, prompted a dramatic change to a pastoral landscape for sheep and later cattle. Only in modern times has arable farming become commercially viable over much of the parish; in 1905 and at least until the 1970s, Hillesden was dominated by dairy farming.¹⁹ The parish has one real peculiarity: its settlement pattern is unlike that of the surrounding parishes, having no single nucleated settlement, but instead a number of isolated hamlets and farmsteads. Both aerial photographs and a terrier of 1657 suggest that there was never a clustered village centre around the church and manor house, but at least three of the existing hamlets – Church End, and the areas now known as The Barracks and Jubilee – were once joined together in a ribbon development. Although some property destruction took place in the medieval period, it would appear that today's unusual settlement pattern was brought about not by the establishment of new areas of settlement but rather by the decay of a single, long and straggly one. The use of the name 'End' at Hillesden's Church End and Chapel End (and in Wood and Middle Ends, recorded in the terrier of 1657) would seem to confirm such a suggestion. This paper will examine the possibility that much of the shrinkage was caused by the enclosure programme undertaken by Edmund Denton in the mid seventeenth century.

Woodland

Very little woodland survives in the parish although maps of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and correspondence, suggests that this was not always the case.²⁰ Although the number was small by the standards of Buckinghamshire and particularly of the heavily-wooded southern Chiltern hundreds, Hillesden was one of only three parishes of the nine in Rowley Hundred which had sufficient woodland for pigs recorded in Domesday (Preston Bissett had enough for 200 and Woolstone for 100).²¹

However, the earliest document which provides clues to the landscape of Hillesden before the seventeenth-century enclosure is a charter of 949 which records the grant of an estate to the king's

reeve, Æthelmær.²² The section of the bounds recited in the charter which refers to Hillesden begins in the north-west corner of the parish with the great *wyrtruma* or 'wood-edge' – a green way marking the estate boundary with Lenborough.²³ The Lenborough side of the boundary is still wooded with a noticeable but much-reduced wood-bank and ditch. The use of the word *wyrtruma* probably means that portions of the tree-cover had already been cleared, perhaps the area known in 1763 as Bradford Wood Close, which was described at that date as 'poor pasture'.²⁴

So, by 949, some clearance had already taken place, and arable fields already reached to the parish boundary in the south-west. For a short period at the end of the twelfth century, after Henry II's Assize of Woodstock in 1184, the parish was included in the extended bounds of Bernwood Forest.²⁵ The two areas in the north of the parish known as Old and New Parks may indicate further early reclamation, perhaps areas set aside for the management of deer with open lawns.²⁶

Before the Reformation, when it was given to the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford, the rectory of Hillesden was part of the property of Notley Abbey near Thame in Oxfordshire.²⁷ At some point, there was a dispute between Bradwell Priory and Notley Abbey over the tithes due from an assart called 'Estle' on the Padbury/Hillesden boundary.²⁸ Bradwell insisted that the assart was in Padbury and claimed the tithes for themselves, but Notley argued that the land fell within the bounds of Hillesden. The adjudicators in the debate, the dean of Oxford and the prior of Oseney, came down on the side of Notley. The approximate location of this piece of land is not difficult to determine, although the name 'Estle' no longer survives, as the boundary between Hillesden and Padbury is short, less than half a mile, consisting of a length of Padbury Brook to the north of the King's Bridge. A trackway following the parish boundary from the north-west diverts temporarily away from the boundary before curving back to cross the bridge; the site of the assart must fall within the area bounded by the track on one side and the river on the other. The name 'Estle' – 'clearing in the east', fits with the location of the assart on the boundary with Padbury and shows that land clearance was continuing in the west of the parish towards the south and east along the lower-lying land around the river and meadows.

A brief survey of the rectory lands, taken in 1640, suggests that there was timber in the north-west corner of the parish covering the areas known as Bradford's Wood, The Great Wood, New Park, and Lady Hill (about 170 acres).²⁹ on the map of 1763. By the time of the enclosure in 1652, this was the only wooded portion of the parish, and had probably been so for several centuries. This would be typical for the Vale of Aylesbury as described by Leland who, in his travels for Henry VIII, recorded that the Vale was 'cleane barren of wood and is champaine'.³⁰

Arable

Arable land in the parish was extensive. The 949 charter bounds show that arable headlands already abutted the parish boundary in the tenth century, and Domesday Book records that Robert, count of Mortain (the first earl of Cornwall), held enough land for a single plough and Walter Giffard sufficient for 14 ploughs, of which four belonged to the demesne.³¹ Assuming a standard 120 acre ploughland, then 1800 acres out of a total of around 2500 were under cultivation in 1086.

An inquisition post-mortem dated 11 May 1274 includes an extent covering the land belonging to John of Courtenay. It records 16 yardlands of arable in demesne and another 24 held in villeinage, 20 acres of meadow and 48 of pasture. Courtenay was not the only landowner in Hillesden at this time, but arable farming was evidently predominant in the parish in the late thirteenth century.³² This is backed up by a late thirteenth-century grant which states that the canon's garden backed on to the open fields.³³ Certainly, then, by the high middle ages, if not long before, cultivation extended from the centre of the village right out to the parish boundaries.

Apart from these odd snippets, after the 949 charter there are no further major pieces of documentary evidence for the landscape of Hillesden until 1652, when a terrier of the arable land belonging to the parsonage was drawn up on the eve of Edmund Denton's enclosure.³⁴ The evidence of the terrier suggests that, by the mid-seventeenth century, open-field farming had become of far less importance in the parish.

According to the terrier, there were four open-fields: West Field and Windmill Field (from the evidence of the 949 charter these were probably the original two fields), and Rimlow Field and Little

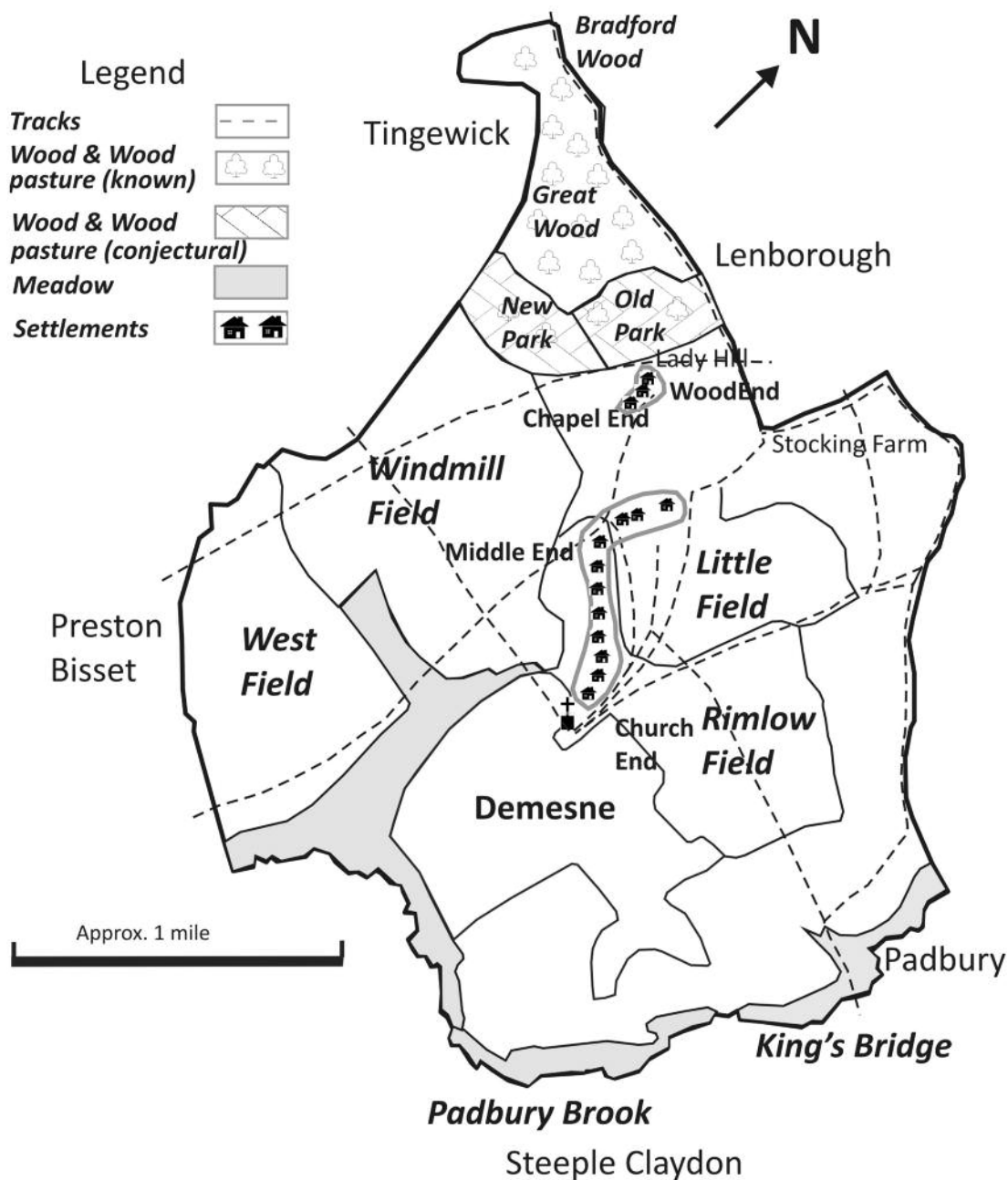


FIGURE 1 Hillesden before 1652

Field (these two easterly fields have a greater number of closes with 'moor', 'thorn' or 'bush' suffixes, suggesting reclamation from waste). The terrier lists in some detail 145 acres of arable land farmed by the nine college tenants in each of those fields. In the description of each strip, John Kersey (mathematician and tutor to the Denton boys)³⁵ provides information on the topography of Hillesden's pre-enclosure landscape.³⁶ Roads and hedges are particularly common features within the terrier, as are the meadows around West Field.³⁷

Although it cannot be proven, it is likely that arable cultivation in four fields was a relatively modern introduction to Hillesden; Buckinghamshire was typically a county of two- or three-field tillage. Neighbouring Padbury had created a third field sometime before 1591, probably in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Like the later fields in Hillesden, the furlong names in this third field, called Hedge Field, suggest that they had been carved out of waste land or common.³⁸

Most of the furlongs listed in the terrier were named: many can be traced on later maps as field names but others are untraceable, particularly as Hillesden's fields are not generally given topographical names. Within each furlong, each ridge was numbered (for example, Nicholas Butterson held the 28th and 36th ridges in Long Woofurlong), and each measured about 0.37 acres (1½ roods). Using the highest number of ridges known within each furlong, it is possible to calculate a minimum acreage under plough in each of the four fields in 1652. Rimlow Field, with at least 621 ridges contained, therefore, at least 230 acres. Little Field was about 84 acres, Windmill Field 138 acres, and West Field about 143 acres making a minimum of 595 acres under the plough just before formal enclosure. This can be tested. It is known that Denton had about 30 tenants in the early 1660s: using this figure as a multiplier, and allowing for a further 50 acres of glebe arable known in 1652, another estimate of approximately 650 acres can be reached.³⁹ Even allowing for inevitable under-counting, this is a huge reduction in arable acreage from the eleventh century. Only about a quarter of the parish was under the plough.

A few entries in the terrier suggest more specifically that some enclosure had already taken place. Thomas Armborough's 'piked land' appears in the account of Windmill Field, and the 18th ridge in the furlong in Rimlow Bushes 'shooting upon

Lamport's Den' is described as a 'square plot'. Kersey did not describe the use of the land, so it is not possible to tell whether these enclosures were for arable or for pasture except in occasional circumstances; the piked and partially-hedged land in Windmill Furlong South was evidently still ploughed in ridges, and one area in Rimlow Field is referred to specifically as cow pasture. Town closes suggest that small fields existed around the settlement.⁴⁰

The demesne appears to have been consolidated before 1652; the terrier refers repeatedly to hedged fields in the demesne which were later illustrated within the demesne park in 1763.⁴¹ It is feasible that some of the reduction in arable acreage since the Middle Ages could have been included within the area of the demesne. However, the new park created by the consolidation included the old one, within an area of only 495 acres.⁴² There was no arable land within the demesne park in the 1660s.⁴³ The glebe land was still in the open-fields.⁴⁴

An area called Rellow or Rollow Hill covering about 30 acres was enclosed by Sir Alexander Denton before 1640. This seems to have been Rowley Hill, the ancient hundredal meeting place on the eastern edge of the parish, which had been an area of common land for rectory tenants. Another 30 acres was evidently about to be enclosed.⁴⁵

A slightly later terrier, drawn up in 1657 on the death of Edmund Denton, and which covers the entire parish, gives in some detail the positions of properties, closes, roads and woodland with acreages and ownership. This document mentions other early enclosures, notably the farm called Stocking Farm (now Stockingwood Farm).⁴⁶ The name suggests early woodland clearance, and the farm sits at the end of the great *wyrtruma*.⁴⁷ The terrier lists twelve closes belonging to Stocking Farm, all of which fall on the edge of the open-fields and were probably never part of that system. Stocking Farm could, therefore, have been the first outlying farmstead in the parish. One of the closes, called Stocking Lane, is the remains of the trackway that once led to Rowley Hill and crossed by the estate bounds recorded in the charter of 949.⁴⁸

So far this discussion of arable farming in Hillesden has been based on written surveys and other documentary evidence. Aerial photographs of the parish taken in the 1950s, showing considerable

ridge and furrow, underscore the evidence of the documents. They reveal that arable cultivation had, at some stage, expanded over some former tenement sites: ridge and furrow can be seen extending over apparent building earthworks. If, as has been already suggested above, Hillesden's arable acreage was already *reduced* before the seventeenth century, the evidence of the photographs would confirm that arable *expansion* had happened much earlier in Hillesden's agricultural history. However, this overlying ridge and furrow only covers a small portion of the shrunken village site at Church End – the aerial photographs show a large area of former settlement apparently not damaged by the arable expansion.⁴⁹

Roads and Trackways

Anciently, the hundred moot was held within the parish on Rowley Hill, a low but prominent rise on which seven footpaths still converge. Several of these paths were once trackways of some significance. Leaving the *wyrtruma* the bounds recorded in the charter of 949 follow, for a short distance, the hollow way or the road between Gawcott to the north and Hillesden Church End, which suggests that the central settlement of the parish, around the church, was already well-established by the mid-tenth century.⁵⁰ The bounds ignore the first track turning east to Rowley Hill (*rugan hlawe*) but follow a second track just inside a hedge planted within the neighbouring parish of Lenborough, and consequently not mentioned in the charter (the surveyor consistently ignores any feature which falls on the 'wrong' side of the estate boundary). The bounds continue south-east along the broad track which skirts Rowley Hill, then leave it to join Padbury Brook.

Aerial photographs reveal tracks some of which were evidently in use either as roads or footpaths in 1763 and others which survived even then only as hedge lines or hollow ways. In the 1652 terrier, numerous 'ways' are mentioned to describe the position of the strips within the fields including the King's Way, the Portway, the Mareway, Windmill Way, Church Way, and the Downway.⁵¹ The more complete 1657 terrier of the parish reveals small tracks and roads linking fields and tenements.⁵² The system of roads and trackways that was initially focussed on the hundredal meeting point of Rowley Hill shifted as the significance of the area declined during the medieval period.⁵³

Pasture

White Kennet in *Parochial Antiquities* records that Hugh de Bolebec of Whitchurch had, in the mid-twelfth century, granted 200 acres of pasture to Notley Abbey plus additional pasturage for plough cattle, and William Phillips, of Chapel End, who assisted with the enclosure in 1652, asserted that there had been 80 acres of pasture for the use of Christ Church's tenants in that hamlet.⁵⁴ While the two terriers focus on arable land, the later one does mention that the old enclosures of Stocking Farm included a cow pasture and an area called Green Hill which was, conceivably, under grass.⁵⁵ On the eve of enclosure, each college tenant was entitled to three cow commons, a generous allocation indicating plentiful pasture for dairying, and thirty sheep commons per yardland.⁵⁶ Many of the fields on the 1763 map have names which suggest pasture: Cow Close, Cow Pasture, Lower and Upper Grassocks, Palmers Pasture, Ram Hill, and Upper Rushey Pasture.⁵⁷

Meadow

Meadowland was rich and extensive, particularly along Padbury Brook which marks the parish boundary for some distance in the south. Domesday records the equivalent of two ploughlands of meadow.⁵⁸ Later documents mention meadow held in severalty which belonged to the rectory and to the demesne, as well as lot meadow (Revel Mead – probably the Revett Mead of 1763, and Water Mead). Each yardland was allocated sufficient meadow to produce 1½ loads of hay worth £1 a load.⁵⁹

Manor and Mills

At enclosure the demesne park, consolidated before 1652, was enlarged and empaled.⁶⁰ Although there is no evidence that the parish was divided between two manors, a possible moated site at Chapel End could be an earlier manorial residence associated with the two areas of park in the north of the parish.⁶¹ Certainly a field there is known locally as Town Close, and has revealed evidence of building stone and pottery.⁶² At Domesday there were two principal landholders, each of whom *may* have had a residence in Hillesden.⁶³ The hamlet is the only one of the outlying settlement areas which may have existed separately before enclosure, although much closer to it than its present isolation would suggest. Another possibility is that Chapel End was a small

group of houses clustered around St Margaret's, a daughter chapel of All Saints church.⁶⁴ It is still debated, though, whether a chapel actually existed on this site, or whether St Margaret's formed a chantry chapel built onto the church, for which no architectural evidence survives.⁶⁵ Locally, the field known as Lady Hill is taken to be the site of the chapel.

One mill is recorded in 1086, although it is known that there were two by the thirteenth century. A windmill stood on the slopes of, unsurprisingly, Windmill Field until the middle of the twentieth century, although the date of its origin is unknown. There was a water-mill close to the Claydon Planks (the ford between the parishes of Hillesden and Steeple Claydon); maps show the parish boundary at this point following a meandering branch of Padbury Brook, but there is a far straighter section which may well have formed the mill leet.⁶⁶ In 1629, and almost certainly previously, the tenants of the manor were obliged to use the lord's mill.⁶⁷

Conclusion

On the eve of enclosure, then, Hillesden was a parish of substantial though much-reduced arable land. The landscape was one of mixed husbandry. The few wills extant for Hillesden, all proven through the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and including inventories, back this up. The will of William Staunton, yeoman, proved in 1592, bequeathed to his wife £200 and 20 ewes, 20 teggs, 20 shearhoggies and 'thewes running forthe of the whole companie and severall flockes of sheep'; sufficient evidence, perhaps, to confirm at least some pre-seventeenth century enclosure for pasture. Staunton does, however, give gifts of grain, particularly to 'everie poore householder that hath no corne growinge within in the parishe'.⁶⁸ William Paxton's will of 1628 confirms the lease of a yardland to Ann Stoakes, and that of John Butcher, a much smaller man, gives a cow and some sheep as well as items relating to grain-growing.⁶⁹ By the late seventeenth century, however, a different style of land use is apparent.

THE PROCESS OF HILLESDEN'S ENCLOSURE

Early in the eighteenth century, Alexander Denton informed the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church

that the enclosure of Hillesden was both begun and finished by his grandfather, Edmund, immediately after the terrier of 1652 had been made.⁷⁰ We have already seen, however, that the process had begun sooner. The returns to the commission of 1517/19 reported that only 4 acres had been enclosed in the previous 30 years; this was in 1499 by a lay freeholder for the purpose of a park. The extent of enclosure at this date in Hillesden was exceptionally small; neighbouring parishes saw slightly larger areas enclosed during this period – in Steeple Claydon it was 90 acres; in Preston Bissett, 36 acres; Gawcott, 30 acres; Lenborough, 60 acres. Not all was for pasture: according to the commission, 223 acres of the total of 694 acres enclosed in Buckingham hundred (a mere 1.23% of the total area of the hundred) were for arable. It was different in other areas of the county; 3000 acres of enclosure were recorded in Ashendon hundred (4.46%) immediately to the south. The same returns show little displacement of residents or destruction of houses in Buckingham hundred.⁷¹

According to Christ Church's tenants, by 1640 another 30 acres on Hollow Hill (possibly Rowley Hill) had been enclosed, and they were anticipating that Alexander Denton was going to enclose a further 30 acres on Lady Hill.⁷² In 1721, 505 acres of enclosures were described as 'old', *i.e.* pre-1652.⁷³ Some of these were described in the 1657 terrier: 127 acres of Stocking Farm and *c.*90 acres of home closes attached to each cottage or farmstead. The remainder may have included the three areas outside the demesne called 'park' on the 1763 map – Old Park (54 acres), New Park (28 acres), and an area known as Warren Park (54 acres) in the south-east of the parish.⁷⁴ There appear to have been no complaints about these early seventeenth-century encroachments except for a minor grumble in 1640 by William Phillips, a Christ Church tenant, that Sir Alexander had enclosed an area which Christ Church's tenants had traditionally held in common, and had dug a slipe of about half an acre on college land. Little was done to resolve this complaint immediately, although these enclosures evidently contributed to a general confusion over the division of land-holdings in the parish. Sir Orlando Bridgeman, lawyer to both the Dentons and the Verneys, and close friend of Dr William Denton, advised in 1645, after the death of Sir Alexander, that a new lease be drawn up to protect the estate during the minority of Sir Edmund.⁷⁵

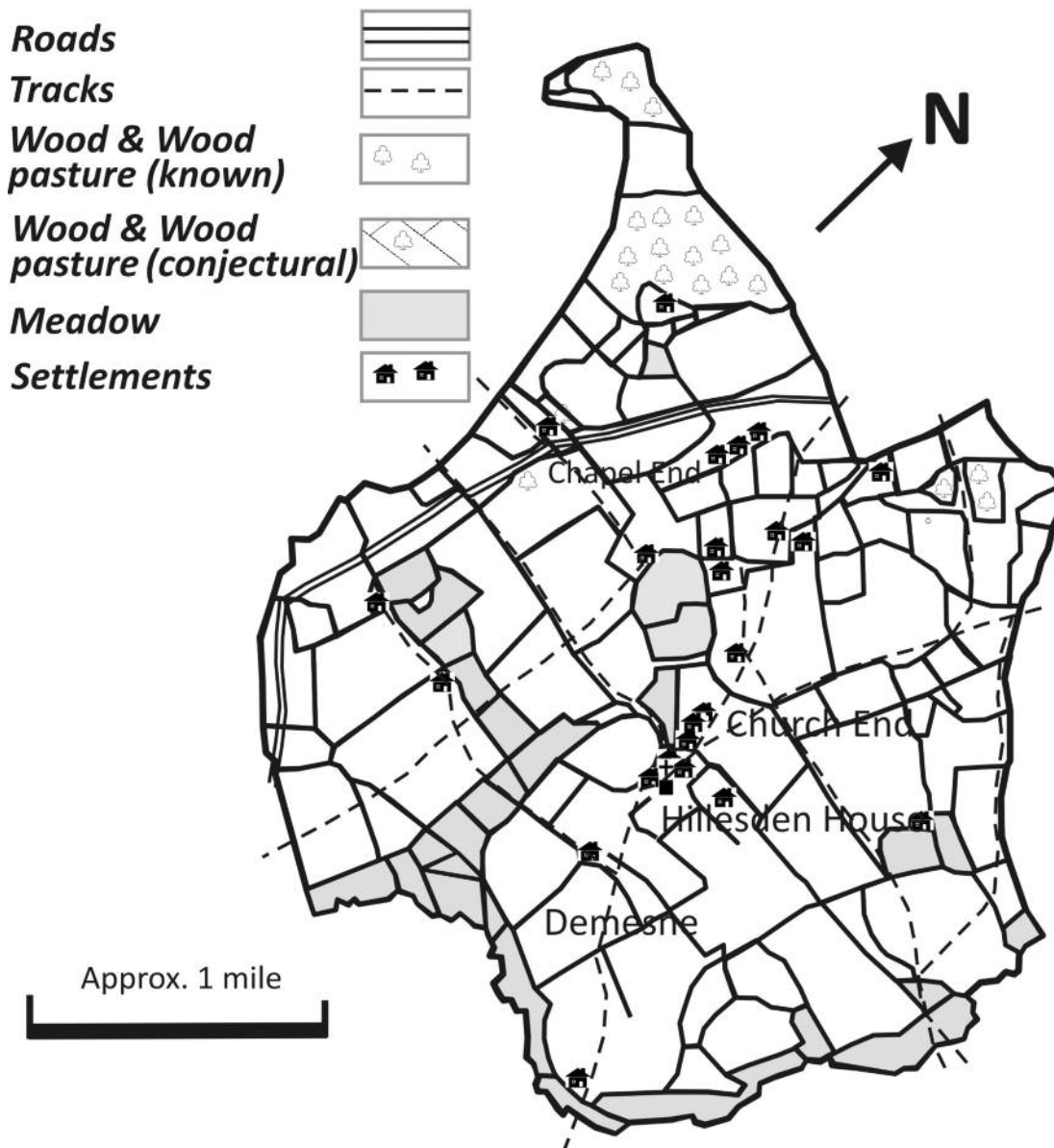


FIGURE 2 Hillesden in 1763

Right into the mid-nineteenth century there were disputes over the ownership of land in Hillesden, culminating in a new survey by Benjamin Badcock in 1841, which finally set out those lands and cottages belonging to the rectory, and those belonging to freeholders.⁷⁶

Prior to the Civil War, the Verney family were consolidating their central estate at Middle Claydon with an emphasis on enclosure. Some of the demesne was enclosed in the fifteenth century, all by the seventeenth.⁷⁷ In 1621, Sir Edmund Verney enclosed part of the common fields and

meadows, compensating himself for the cost by eliminating common rights in the woods and his tenants by doubling the length of their leases. The 1630s saw exchanges of land and further consolidation. On the whole, existing tenants did not suffer unduly from the Verney strategy; only outsiders taking on new farms had to pay new economic rents.⁷⁸ Estate management by the Dentons in Hillesden is not so well-documented, but there is evidence to suggest that similar schemes were introduced and carried through; the experience of the Verneys in Middle Claydon is a valuable point of reference for comparing events in Hillesden.

Both the Verney and the Denton families suffered during the war, although the Verneys were less partisan than the Dentons. Both families were heavily in debt, and both suffered sequestration at the hands of Parliament. In 1641, Sir Alexander Denton was given permission to sell land in order to pay debts, and in 1644, after the destruction of Hillesden House by Parliamentary forces, the estates were seized and sequestered.⁷⁹ In the lists sent by the county committee for Buckinghamshire to Parliament, the estates of Sir Alexander Denton, including Hillesden, were shown to be the most valuable at £2750.⁸⁰ North Buckinghamshire was disputed territory during the Civil War, and the skirmishes which took place in the area until 1646 rendered the land almost worthless with the effects of seizure, plunder, and the disruption of normal trade.⁸¹ Hillesden was at half-rents in 1644, and taxation levied across the north of the county was high. There is evidence that some villages in the northern hundreds of Buckinghamshire suffered double taxation.⁸² Dr William Denton, uncle both to Ralph Verney and Edmund Denton, worked hard during the 1640s to retrieve the Verney estates from the sequestrators. No doubt he did the same for Hillesden, although he was more successful at Middle Claydon, where the estates were returned in 1648.⁸³

Immediately, William Denton and William Roades, the Verneys' bailiff, advised that the enclosure of Middle Claydon should be completed.⁸⁴ It was important that income from estates be maximised as soon as possible: the war had, in many cases, devastated the landscape and substantial capital investment would have been required to right the effects.⁸⁵ Although the wisdom of enclosure was indisputable, its completion at Middle

Claydon was delayed, maybe because of the poor harvests and livestock diseases which struck Buckinghamshire in 1648 and 1649. However, as soon as Sir Ralph returned home from exile in 1653, the scheme, costing £1000, half the annual income of the estate, was put into action.⁸⁶ The first few months were used in smoothing the way, particularly with the local parson who had objected to the earlier enclosures of the 1620s and 1630s. The physical labour of ditching, fencing, and hedging began in the autumn of 1654. Broad's account of the Middle Claydon enclosure suggests there was little dissension or direct action against the enclosure in spite of the rent increases which were soon imposed.⁸⁷

Evidence suggests that the process of enclosure in Middle Claydon is paralleled by that in Hillesden. As we have seen, enclosure in Hillesden had begun long before the seventeenth century and had progressed steadily. In the 1650s around 500 acres of open field remained to be enclosed in the 1650s in Middle Claydon. Just before enclosure, as we have seen, a minimum of 600 acres were still in open fields in Hillesden, all of which were enclosed in 1652, making a total of 1400 enclosed acres.⁸⁸ A covenant in Nicholas Butterson's lease of 1629 shows that Butterson, and probably many of his neighbours, were already obliged to allow their lord to enclose at will.⁸⁹ The demesne lands in Hillesden were consolidated before the final enclosure of 1652; the rectory terrier that year includes no land within the bounds of the demesne as described in the 1657 terrier or as illustrated on the map of 1763.⁹⁰ Phillips, Christ Church's tenant living at Chapel End, assisted the surveyor, John Kersey, with the laying out of the enclosure.⁹¹ This does not seem to have been unusual: by the mid-seventeenth century, small farmers were beginning to see the advantages of enclosure, and many schemes were carried out amicably and with an element of compromise. In Astwood, in 1613, the lords of the manor drew the inhabitants together to agree the terms of enclosure, and in Great Linford an enclosure agreement was drawn up in 1658 specifically to eliminate many of the problems of commonable land which were increasingly highlighted by enclosure petitioners.⁹²

Unlike the Verneys, who wavered between neutrality and support of the Parliamentarians during the Civil War, the Denton family were staunchly Royalist. Sir Alexander was labelled a

delinquent in 1642, and disabled from occupying his seat in the Commons in January 1644, which must have removed him from friends and useful contacts.⁹³ Hillesden House had been sacked after the siege of 1644, and the recovery of the estates from sequestration would have been expensive and difficult for a minor and a Royalist.⁹⁴ It was not until 1651 that Edmund was summoned to the Committee for Compounding to plead for the return of his estates. Edmund advised the court that part of the estate (the land attached to the prebend of Gawcott) had been settled on his family by parliament and should, therefore, be returned: much of the remainder, Denton claimed, had been settled on Sir Peter Temple of Stowe to cover debts (it is possible that arrangements like this were entered into deliberately to prevent the acquisition of land by the sequestrators⁹⁵). He could not produce any deeds to confirm this, as the case was still proceeding through the court of Chancery where the deeds were held. The release of his estates eventually came in May 1652.⁹⁶

Although finances must have been tight, Denton, like his cousin and probably on the advice of his uncle, Dr William, embarked immediately on a programme of enclosure. The terrier of the rectory and the map by John Kersey must have been drawn up during the summer of that year, and the work of enclosure commenced in the autumn. Once begun, the process was surprisingly quick. Unlike Ralph Verney, it appears that Edmund Denton did not have to smooth any ruffled feathers: his son, Alexander, advised the Dean and Chapter that all the freeholders had agreed to the enclosure, and new leases of 99 years granted to at least some tenants must have helped ease any potential difficulties.⁹⁷ Only the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, owners of the rectory, raised any complaints, but not for over 60 years, when they insisted that the common fields had been enclosed and converted to pasture without their permission. Evidently not all the correspondence survives, but Denton replied vehemently that this was not the case, that the 1397 acres 2 rods and 7 perches had been enclosed with the consent of all the freeholders, who were then bought out by Edmund Denton. Denton's argument must have been conclusive: the Dean and Chapter gave way and confirmed the enclosure subject to the protection of common rights, and on the condition that Alexander Denton rebuilt the parsonage house which had been demolished with several other tene-

ments as part of the enclosure scheme (although Denton tried to insist that the parsonage had been destroyed in the Civil War action at Hillesden).⁹⁸

The 1657 terrier suggests that Thomas Armbrorough, possibly one of the freeholders in Hillesden, fenced his own land.⁹⁹ If this was common policy, it would explain how Denton was able to undertake the enclosure whilst money was in short supply. He would, however, have had to find cash to hedge and ditch his own closes at least, and it is known that he bought out the other freeholders quite soon after enclosure, presumably after they had enclosed their own fields, sometime before his death late in 1657.¹⁰⁰

The enclosure was, as Sir Alexander stated in 1714, largely completed before Sir Edmund's death.¹⁰¹ Edmund's will, proven at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on 4 May 1659, confirms leases of property, including enclosed lands, to his tenants. The confirmation of John Kinton's 99-year lease included the enclosed grounds of arable, pasture, and meadow received by him in exchange for his $\frac{3}{4}$ yardland. Also mentioned are two closes of about 57 acres, once part of Windmill Field, a close of meadow, and a newly-enclosed ground called Warren Leys.¹⁰² The 1657 terrier does not specify the uses to which the new enclosures were put, but correspondence between Sir Alexander and the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church shows that, by 1714, the parish was divided approximately as follows: demesne c.20% (495 acres), mowing ground c.12.5% (293 acres), glebe 7% (191 acres), leaving 60.5% (1527a 1r 28p). Of this, only 188 acres were arable and 140 acres were wood. Nearly 1200 acres, almost half the area of the parish, were now devoted to pasture.¹⁰³ A small area is known to have remained in strips in 1657: the terrier records 'several furlongs of arable lands...not yet enclosed' in the fields once known as Rimlow and Little Fields. These all appear to have been farmed by Christ Church tenants, and to have formed a small area on the margins of the two fields.¹⁰⁴ Certainly by 1763, and probably before the debates between Alexander Denton and the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, these areas had been enclosed as well.

It can be seen, then, that the process of enclosure in Hillesden reflects in many ways that of Middle Claydon. However, in Middle Claydon enclosure had advanced considerably further before the final agreement of 1654. The motives of the two land-

lords in enclosing were the same – to increase revenues from the estates as quickly as possible. In Middle Claydon, though, the piecemeal enclosure which had taken place throughout the medieval and early modern periods had eroded the open fields to such an extent that they were no longer economically viable.¹⁰⁵ The re-organisation of that estate was not only essential for post-war recovery, but was an agricultural necessity. In Hillesden, although the open fields were largely intact in 1652, the need to raise funds was just as acute: the Dentons were in the process of rebuilding the mansion, and in the business of maximising profits.

Of the five parishes which surround Hillesden (Gawcott, Tingewick, Preston Bissett, Steeple Claydon, and Padbury) three had experienced some enclosure before the process was completed by Act of Parliament, emphasising the importance of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century enclosure in the area.¹⁰⁶ That there had been no complaint may reflect the advance of new attitudes to enclosure: in Hillesden, the process may have been assisted by the availability of an inter-commoning arrangement on Lenborough Wild, just over the parish boundary to the north, and by the new long leases which were introduced by Edmund Denton before his death.¹⁰⁷

THE EFFECTS OF ENCLOSURE IN HILLESDEN

Enclosure in the seventeenth century was seen as an agricultural improvement, implemented particularly to increase cash income.¹⁰⁸ In Middle Claydon, in order to consolidate their estate and to make the final enclosure a simpler process, the Verneys had already bought out numerous copyholders and small freeholders. These purchases were made easier by the particularly high turnover of tenants in the war zone of north Buckinghamshire.¹⁰⁹ Pre-1654 enclosures in Middle Claydon resulted in the elimination of common rights in the woodland and on waste.¹¹¹ New farms were laid out in the fields, and incoming tenants were required to build new houses in the centres of the new enclosures.¹¹² The reduction in the size of the open fields, which were still being eroded by piecemeal enclosure, to a mere 500 acres caused problems with stinting and negatively affected the cultivation of the land.¹¹³ The final enclosure resulted in an estate laid largely to grass and let at

profitable rack rents. Broad estimates that the return on the capital investment of enclosure was in excess of 50% and possibly approaching 100%. Just before 1650, the Middle Claydon estate was yielding a revenue of c.£1400: by the 1660s, income was in excess of £2000 *per annum*.¹¹⁴

How did the enclosure of Middle Claydon affect the population and economy of the parish, and how far can these changes be reflected in the less well-documented history of Hillesden? Broad demonstrates that Middle Claydon may have grown quite fast over the sixteenth century, stabilising around 1600 but then declining sometime after 1676. He compares this with the position in the other Claydons (East and Steeple), parishes in which the Verneys also had interests, where the situations were very different. East Claydon's population remained remarkably stable from the mid-seventeenth century into the nineteenth, while in Steeple Claydon the figures rose rapidly from c.1600, when the population stood at around 315, to 1801, when the census returns show 646 residents. Broad attributes Middle Claydon's decline, which appears to be unique in north Buckinghamshire, to the 'closing' of the parish under a single, strong landlord able to prevent in-migration.¹¹⁵ The numbers of tenants decreased in the parish, particularly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the farms grew proportionately larger. With the decline in the number of farms, so the destruction of old farm buildings increased. Tenants were selected for their ability to pay and for their expertise: loyalty seems not to have been an issue with either tenant or landlord, and the turnover of families was high. Few family names can be traced through the period 1600–1800.¹¹⁶ The enclosure of Middle Claydon led to changes in the physical landscape of the parish, to the abandonment of old customs and tenures, and in the stability of the parish's population.¹¹⁷

In Hillesden, changes in the landscape are evident immediately after enclosure. The pre-enclosure rectory terrier of 1652 shows nearly all the arable land still in strips within the four open fields. The fields were divided into numerous furlongs, many of which were already separated by hedges, but it is apparent, as we have seen, that the arable lands of the rectory tenants were still widely scattered.¹¹⁸ The preamble to the terrier confirms this:

Terrars of all Arable Lands and Leys belonging to Hillesdon Parsonage made measured and delineated in a large Map in velom by John Kersey in 1652 as they did lie *dispersed in severall Furlongs in the four common fields of Hillesdon* aforesd viz. the West field, Windmill Field, The Little Field & Rimlow field before they were Inclos'd by Edmund Denton Esq^r¹¹⁹

The 1657 terrier, drawn up on the death of Edmund Denton, reveals a different landscape, one of numerous permanent closes. Small home closes, probably of ancient origin and often of under an acre, were attached to each property, but the open fields were divided into plots of vastly different sizes, from just a couple of acres to the 54 acres of Heynes Great Ground. The effect of enclosure on the Hillesden landscape can be seen in the map of 1763 which, when compared with the 1657 terrier, shows few changes in the intervening century (except an element of further sub-division). The essence of the old open field system can still be seen to a certain extent: the largest closes are to be found where the open fields had suffered least from encroachment and piecemeal enclosure. This is particularly evident in the remains of Windmill Field, shown by the four new enclosures; Windmill Field, Element Piece, the Wheat Close and Heynes Great Ground. The pre-enclosure lines of West Field can be seen in Home Ground and the new West Field, and Little Field still shows up in the area covered by Hillesden Field and Frydays Ground. Rimlow Field, which may have been the last field to be claimed from the scrub, is harder to recreate: most of the closes which occupy the land appear to have pasture or meadow names. Later pencil markings on the 1763 map suggest that only four of the closes in this eastern corner of the parish were, in fact, ever open field.¹²⁰ However, the relative stability of the old furlongs, now fossilised as individual closes held in severalty, belies the changing use of the land from arable to pasture. We know that at least 595 acres of land were still under plough in Hillesden before 1652. By the early eighteenth century, the arable acreage was considerably reduced; Alexander Denton's accounts during his dispute with Christ Church (c.1714–21) give a range of acreages ploughed from 100 to 188 acres.¹²¹ By 1782, when Elizabeth Coke was tenant, only 50 acres were ploughed.¹²²

Aerial photographs of Hillesden reveal signifi-

cant abandonment of houses in the centre of the parish between the two main areas of settlement.¹²³ Some of this was undoubtedly medieval, caused by an apparent expansion of arable cultivation. The remainder of the tenements, however, appear to have disappeared during the century immediately after the completion of the enclosure. The 1657 terrier not only lists the fields and closes in Hillesden, but includes the houses and cottages. Between Church End and Middle End, where the village shrinkage appears most evident, there are 14 houses, cottages and tenements recorded: the positions of some show that they were standing in areas not only unoccupied now but along a road which no longer survives. The photographs show a continuous strip of settlement which seems to correspond with the evidence from the terrier. further 31 houses and cottages are recorded in the parish, excluding the manor house, of which all but one are within the main areas of settlement.¹²⁴

By 1763, when the parish was surveyed and mapped for Elizabeth Coke, the majority of these properties had gone and a new feature, farmsteads within the fields, had appeared. At least three new farms had been established and other properties, which once would have stood within a cluster of cottages, were now isolated.¹²⁵ One of the few surviving bundles of bills from the Denton estate (which form part of the Holkham manuscripts) records the building of new houses in 1658 for Mr French and in 1663 for Richard Wiseman in West Field, and the removal of Robert Brasshead's house and barn to Mare Way Ground.¹²⁶ This is paralleled in Middle Claydon, where the enclosure caused the destruction of a number of buildings and the removal of some farmsteads out into the fields.¹²⁷ The changing foci in the parish also altered the pattern of roads and paths in Hillesden. Although many of the old trackways still survived as foot-paths in 1763, a few were selected for 'up-grading' and became more prominent. The importance of the old medieval routes, which had already degenerated into field tracks, was forgotten. By 1847 the parish, which had once been a hub for numerous cross-country routes as well as local roads, had become relatively isolated, with only one through-road.¹²⁸

The effect of enclosure on the income of Hillesden is difficult to assess, because of the absence of manorial documents or substantial household accounts. However, the glebe land,

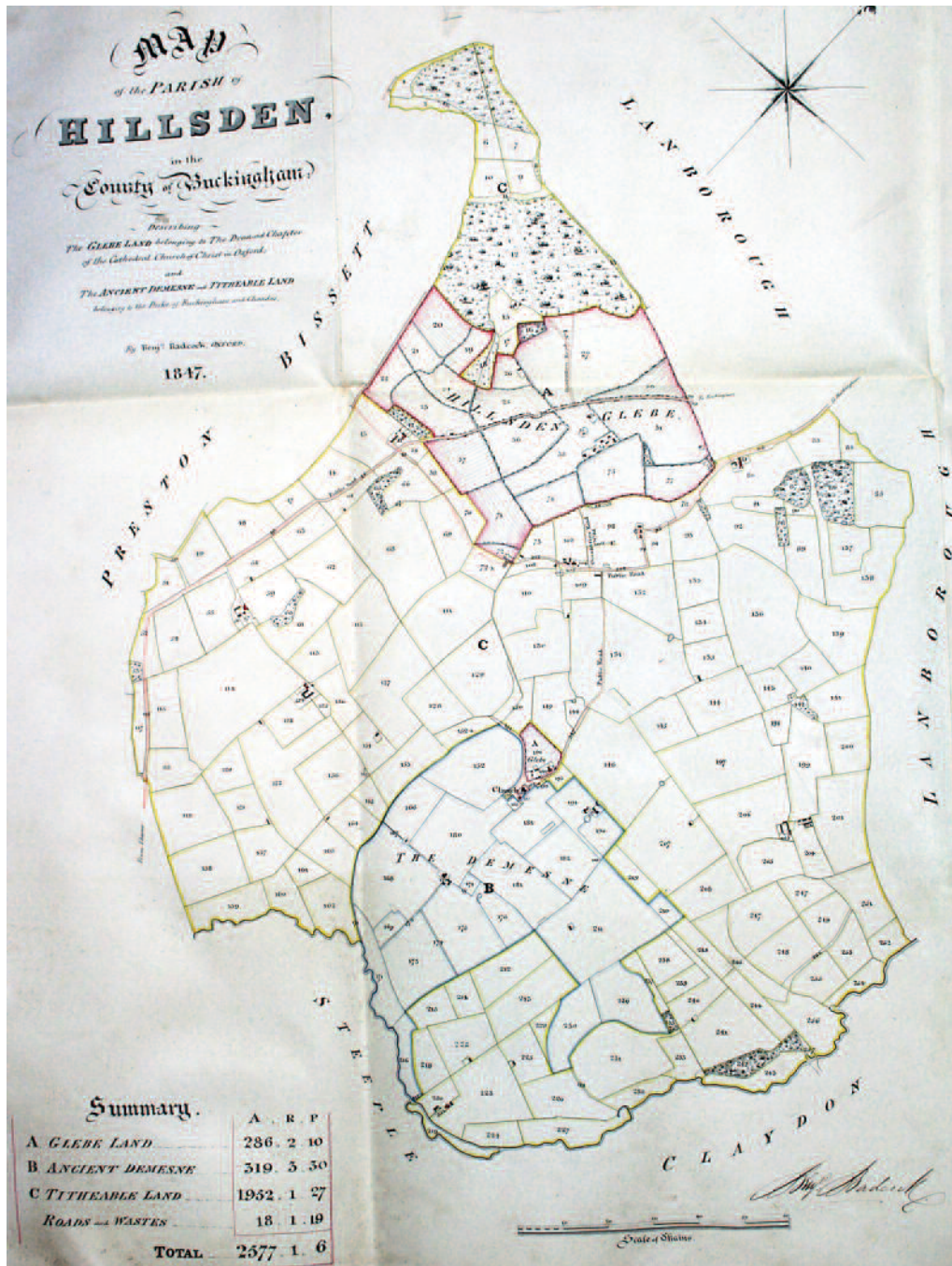


FIGURE 3 Benjamin Badcock's tithe map of Hillesden, 1847 (CCA xlvi.c.7)

which had consisted of nine yardlands before enclosure valued at £8 *per annum* each, was found after enclosure in *c.* 1714, when it had been consolidated into a block totalling 191 acres, to be worth £114 12s.¹²⁹ This would show an increased return after enclosure of *c.* 63%. William Phillips advised Mr Denton's servant, who had been sent out to discover the value of the rectory lands, that a yardland before enclosure had been worth about 8s but this had risen after enclosure by four times.¹³⁰ Phillips' estimate may have become inflated with the passing years but if he was right, enclosure had increased the revenue from the land by 200%.

Analysis of the Hillesden parish registers shows that baptisms, marriages, and burials all declined from a high point in the early 1630s. Wrigley and Schofield show national trends for the seventeenth century, in which births were rising to 1645, declining to *c.* 1670, and then rising again: marriages also rose into the late 1640s, declined until 1683, and then increased; burials rose consistently until 1678, and then declined.¹³¹ The figures for Hillesden show similarities with the national trends, although the peaks and troughs seem to occur earlier in Hillesden. The smallness of the numbers involved makes reliable analysis impossible, but it would seem that there was a recovery from a trough immediately after the siege of Hillesden House until the early 1660s, when another decline set in. It is feasible, in the light of the small number of events recorded each year, that the decline after the siege was caused entirely by the loss of the mansion, and the Denton household. The low numbers of marriages in the register after the war would suggest a shortage of men, but it could equally be the result of defective recording.¹³² In summary, it seems unlikely that enclosure in 1652 had an adverse effect on the population of Hillesden; rather, analysis of the registers suggests the reverse.

Changes in the total population, traced from a variety of lists and censuses, can be compared with Broad's findings for the Claydons.¹³³ Hillesden's population trends matched those of East Claydon more closely than those of Middle Claydon, despite the broad similarities in the process and timing of their enclosures. The total population of Hillesden remained relatively stable through the 150 years following enclosure; the appearance of general decline, suggested by the parish registers, may be a symptom of the rapid turnover of families in the

parish causing fewer events to be recorded. However, Middle Claydon's dramatic population decline, attributed to the 'closing' of the parish by the Verneys, was not emulated in Hillesden, despite the consolidation of the land under a single owner after enclosure. The major changes between the two parishes' populations occurred in the later eighteenth century suggesting that these were caused by policy differences in the eighteenth century rather than as a direct result of enclosure. Broad points to a period of engrossing in Middle Claydon between 1688 and 1722, achieved by the eviction of tenants unable to meet rent arrears, and the amalgamation of small and unprofitable farms.¹³⁴ In 1646 there had been 58 farms in Middle Claydon; by 1787 there were only 29. The greatest decline, however, was between 1688 and 1787, when the numbers fell from 47 to 29.¹³⁵ The 1657 terrier and the account book from the 1660s show about 33 tenants in Hillesden immediately after enclosure: although little evidence on the tenurial arrangements of the parish survives from the eighteenth century, it is known that there were only ten farms in 1841.¹³⁶ So, there had been engrossing in Hillesden during the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries without causing a decline in population, such as was seen in Middle Claydon. Allowing for the natural increase in the national population over this period, some out-migration from Hillesden is likely but conditions in the parish must have been such that it was easier for newcomers to settle there than in Middle Claydon, even if many must have come as farm labourers rather than as tenants of the Dentons and their successors.

The parish registers for Hillesden, like those for Middle Claydon, show few names running continuously through the seventeenth century.¹³⁷ The names that do survive are often used as field names by 1763, such as Hobbes, Paxton, and Stokes, emphasising the continuity of those families. It may also be significant that occupations of fathers (which are recorded in the baptism registers only between 1637 and 1701) show a marked change in the titles used. Before the 1650s, husbandman and labourer are the two predominant terms; in the later part of the century, yeoman is pre-eminent. Whether this reflects a change in actual status, that is, the village population changing from one of peasant farmers with a few sheep and some arable holdings in the open fields, to one of higher status pastoral farmers, or reflects just changing percep-

tions of one's own position in society, is difficult to say. It may be significant, however, that the majority of those calling themselves yeomen in the register of baptisms have names unrecorded in Hillesden before 1660, and that two families out of the twelve whose names can be seen throughout the century saw themselves post-enclosure as labourers rather than as husbandmen.¹³⁸ Broad's work on Middle Claydon suggests that enclosure there caused a polarisation of society; the same may have been true for Hillesden.¹³⁹

Enclosure in Hillesden, then, brought about changes in the landscape of the parish, turning it from one of mixed husbandry to one predominantly of pasture and meadow. Hedges, fences, and small fields were not entirely new to the residents: enclosure had evidently begun earlier than 1652, and the arable furlongs around the edges of the main fields had already been separated into smaller permanent closes, although farming remained essentially open field. Shortly after 1652, Hillesden's landscape consisted entirely of individual enclosed fields owned by one landlord (excluding the glebe), with three principal tenants (one of whom, Robert Friday, was a post-enclosure newcomer¹⁴⁰). Farm labour costs suggest that sheep were the main focus, at least of the demesne; hurdle-making and sheep-shearing expenses dominate the few accounts that survive. More sheep were being purchased for the demesne estate than were being sold, suggesting the deliberate establishment of a large flock. However, dairy farming, which was to become the main source of income in Hillesden, was just beginning.¹⁴¹ Some grain was still grown in the 1660s; the Dentons' tithe-corn was harvested from closes in the old Rimlow and Little Fields.¹⁴² The population remained numerically stable but was now scattered more widely across the parish in farms centred in the fields which were, economically, more profitable. The inhabitants of the parish seem to have become more conscious of their places in society: newly arrived tenant farmers frequently saw themselves as yeomen rather than as lowly labourers or husbandmen, and those who had called themselves husbandmen disappear from the records, to be replaced by labourers or servants.

CONCLUSION

Hillesden falls within the classic Midland area characterised, in the medieval period, by nucleated

villages and large fields held in common. Hillesden never conformed to this pattern, and today the settlement of the parish is arranged in a number of small hamlets and isolated farmsteads. Into the late seventeenth century, Hillesden appears to have been a ribbon settlement stretching north-west from the centre around the church. Village shrinkage is evident both from aerial photographs and from land surveys. Certainly by 1763, the inhabited area had split into at four separate hamlets with farms lying outside the principal areas of settlement in the fields.¹⁴³

The development of 'ends' in a village is often associated with the fusion of a number of nuclei into one settlement, as in Raunds, Northamptonshire.¹⁴⁴ In Hillesden, however, aside from the debate over Chapel End, the reverse seems to have taken place, and the diminution of the settlement can be seen to have taken place as a result of the enclosure of the parish in 1652.

The enclosure of Hillesden's open fields parallels that of other Midland parishes in the seventeenth century. Few records survive of the actual process of the enclosure by agreement in Hillesden but, by amplifying the evidence available with examples from neighbouring parishes such as Middle Claydon and Great Linford,¹⁴⁵ it is possible to see Hillesden as a classic case of post-Civil War enclosure undertaken primarily to recover lost income and to renew the productivity of the land. The very lack of records can be seen to demonstrate the ubiquity of enclosure agreements in seventeenth-century Buckinghamshire.¹⁴⁶

Research has shown that enclosure in this period was at least as important as enclosure by Act of Parliament in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The parishes immediately surrounding Hillesden (Gawcott, Tingewick, Preston Bissett, Steeple Claydon, and Padbury) were all finally enclosed by Act of Parliament between 1773 and 1801 but two of these (Preston Bissett and Steeple Claydon) had seen earlier enclosure. Michael Reed demonstrated the importance of pre-Parliamentary enclosure in the north of the county: of the 138 parishes within the region he defines as north Buckinghamshire, 52 were enclosed entirely by Act but at least 40 saw enclosure between 1500 and 1750; others had experienced enclosure in the medieval period. Padbury was one of very few to remain completely unchanged until it was enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1795.¹⁴⁷

The enclosure of Hillesden began long before 1652: evidence from the sixteenth-century will of William Staunton, and from the statements made by William Phillips, show that sheep were already of some importance in the parish and that the lords of the manor, the Denton family, were aware of the advantages enclosure could bring.¹⁴⁸ Major changes in the landscape and economy of the parish were not effected, though, until after the devastations of the Civil War, when the priority for landowners was to recoup losses and restore the agricultural health of the land.¹⁴⁹ That the final enclosure of Hillesden was put into action immediately after the return of the Denton estates in 1651 shows the urgency that was considered necessary. A landscape which, in the early seventeenth century, was predominantly open-field with piecemeal enclosures, pasture, and rich meadows around the edges of those fields, was changed into one of mainly pasture closes and meadow. Small areas of arable in strips remained for a short period after 1652 but, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the non-woodland areas of Hillesden were entirely divided into individual hedges or fenced closes.¹⁵⁰

Numerically, the population of the parish did not suffer from the effects of enclosure. Parish register figures suggest that the Civil War was of some significance in maintaining a decline in population which had begun in the 1630s but baptisms, in particular, were beginning to pick up from the about the time of the enclosure. If this impression is correct – and the low number of events each year makes reliable analysis difficult – the population recovered and stabilised by 1676 when the Compton Census was taken. It seems likely that the tenants to whom Edmund Denton and his son, Alexander, leased the new farms after enclosure took their labourers and farm servants with them, thus giving the appearance of a desertion from the principal settlement. Houses were being moved to new locations, and new properties were constructed soon after enclosure.¹⁵¹ In parallel with the situation in Middle Claydon, Hillesden suffered a rapid turnover of families between the middle and the end of the seventeenth century. However, the evidence suggests that Hillesden population was stable between the late seventeenth century and the mid-nineteenth.

When compared with the various patterns of enclosure in the neighbouring Claydons, Hillesden's experience seems most closely to have

resembled that of Middle Claydon in many ways – in its method, its totality, its timing, its effects on the landscape of the parish, and in the consolidation of land-ownership into the hands of just one family. However, the dramatic result of enclosure and the control of in-migration on the population of Middle Claydon were not paralleled in Hillesden.¹⁵² In this respect, the experience of Hillesden was more similar to that of in East Claydon, where enclosure had the effect of stabilising the population.¹⁵³ The two are not strictly comparable, as the enclosure at East Claydon was completed much later for 'the encouragement of future industry, good Husbandry and Improvement' after the Verneys had achieved dominance in the parish.¹⁵⁴ In the crucial Restoration period, the family had actively resisted enclosure there.¹⁵⁵

Hillesden's enclosure can be compared closely with that of Great Linford, which has already been mentioned as a parish where the changes appear to have been effected by genuine agreement. Reed describes not only the changed landscape of the parish but also the changing structure of society in Great Linford, in which social and economic differences between well-to-do farmers and their labourers were sharpened.¹⁵⁶ In the *Posse Comitatus* of 1798, 42 men were listed in Hillesden, of whom 33 were recorded as labourers and farm servants. In spite of the new self-image illustrated in the late seventeenth-century parish register entries, and in the increase in pastoral farming which required fewer labourers, the reality, at least by the end of the eighteenth century, was somewhat different.¹⁵⁷

Enclosure within the south Midlands was concentrated in three waves (1450–1524, 1575–1674, and 1750–1849). Allen has shown that, unlike the country as a whole, Tudor and early Stuart enclosures were of significance in this area, and were concentrated in natural pastoral areas.¹⁵⁸ The enclosure of Hillesden should be seen as part of this general chronology.

NOTES

1. This paper began life as a dissertation towards an MSt in English Local History submitted in 1997 to the University of Oxford.
2. P.D.A. Harvey, in E. Miller (ed.), *Agrarian history of England and Wales* iii (1991), 255
3. J. Martin, 'Sheep and enclosure in sixteenth-century Northamptonshire', in *Agricultural*

- history review xxxvi (1988), 53–4
4. I.S. Leadam (ed.), *The Domesday of Inclosures 1517–18*, (1897; new ed. 1971), 152
 5. Leadam (ed.), (1971), 153
 6. E.F. Gay, 'The Midlands revolt and the inquisitions of depopulation of 1607', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* xviii (NS), (1904), 233
 7. M. Reed, 'Enclosure in north Buckinghamshire, 1500–1750', in *Agricultural history review* xxxii, (1984), 135
 8. Gay (1904), 196, 212–3
 9. Reed (1984), 139
 10. Butlin (1979), 67; M. Beresford, 'Habitation versus improvement: the debate on enclosure agreement', in F.J. Fisher (ed.), *Essays in the economic and social history of Tudor and Stuart England* (1961), 40–69
 11. J. Thirsk, 'Grassland and stock', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales* iv (1967), 191
 12. J.R. Wordie, 'The south: Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Hampshire', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales* vi (1984), 324
 13. R.A. Butlin, 'The enclosure of open fields and extinction of common rights in England, circa 1600–1750: a review', in H.S.A. Fox and R.A. Butlin, *Change in the countryside: essays on rural England, 1500–1900* (1979), 70
 14. Butlin (1979), 71–2; R.C. Allen, *Enclosure and the yeoman*, (1992), 32; Harvey (1991), 256–8; J. Thirsk, *The agrarian history of England and Wales* iv (1967), 49, 70–1
 15. J. Broad, 'The Verneys as enclosing landlords, 1600–1800', in J. Chartres and D. Hey, *English Rural Society, 1500–1800* (1990), 27–53
 16. Broad, *Transforming English rural society: the Verneys and the Claydons, 1600–1820* (2004), 50
 17. Broad (1990), 30–5
 18. Allen (1992), 32. See also Reed (1984), 133, 144; M. Reed, *The Buckinghamshire landscape* (1979), 179; J. R. Wordie, 'The chronology of English enclosure, 1500–1914', in *Economic History Review* xxxvi (1983), 503
 19. W. Page (ed.), *Victoria County History, Buckinghamshire* i (1905), 399 (hereafter VCH Bucks.). I am grateful to Mr Peter Skelton of Hillesden, for his help and advice on the history and agriculture of the parish.
 20. CCA MS Estates 8 f.32 (an early eighteenth century account by Alexander Denton on the value of the rectory in Hillesden); CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (by the surveyor, H. Fairchild, for Mrs Elizabeth Coke in 1763 and heavily annotated in later years with notes on land use. For further information on this map and of its importance to Christ Church estate management, see D. Fletcher, *The emergence of estate maps, Christ Church, Oxford 1600–1840* (1995), 31–4); CCA xlvi.ii.c.7 (Rectory award with map surveyed by Benjamin Badcock, dated 1847, and drawn up for the tithe commissioners)
 21. *The Buckinghamshire Domesday* (Alecto edition 1988), 9–10, 144^v, 146^v & 147^v (each of the hundreds of Buckinghamshire were anciently divided into three smaller 'sub-hundreds'; Buckingham hundred was made up of Rowley (in which Hillesden falls), Lamua, and Stodfield)
 22. A.H.J. Baines, 'The Chetwode-Hillesden charter of 949' in *Records of Buckinghamshire* XXIV (1982), 1–33; M. Reed, 'Buckinghamshire Anglo-Saxon charter boundaries' in M. Gelling (ed.), *Early Charters of the Thames Valley* (1992), 169–73. This substantial estate included the modern parishes of Chetwode, Preston Bissett and Hillesden.
 23. Baines (1982), 20–1
 24. Baines (1982), 22
 25. J. Broad & R. Hoyle (eds.), *Bernwood. The life and afterlife of a forest* (1997), 3–4
 26. CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763). There are, however, no licences to empark recorded in the Patent Rolls and neither field reveals the conventional rounded shape of the enclosed deer park so the derivation of these names remains a mystery.
 27. G.R.C. Davis, *Medieval cartularies of Great Britain. A short catalogue* (1958), 82. The abbey's cartulary is said to have been destroyed with other muniments by the earl of Abingdon in the mid-nineteenth century when he vacated Rycote House (*Huntington Library Quarterly*, xvii, (1954), 380), but a sixteenth-century exemplification (probably drawn up for official reasons at or just before the Dissolution) survives in the Christ Church archives. Some of the extracts give fragmentary information on Hillesden between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

28. CCA DY13
29. CCA MS Estates 8, f.3 (Particulars of the rectory dated 18 June 1640 and certified by William Phillips, a rectory tenant who later assisted with the enclosure)
30. M. Reed, *The Buckinghamshire Landscape*, (1979), 172; VCH *Bucks* ii (1908), 37; J. Leland, *Itinerary* iv (1711), 101
31. Baines (1982), 24; *The Buckinghamshire Domesday* (Alecto edition 1988), 146^v & 147^v. No manorial documents survive for Hillesden.
32. TNA C133/6 (1). The manor yielded £20 11s 9d p.a. It is interesting that the villeins' arable was worth more per acre than that in demesne (7s 5½d compared to 6s p.a.); R.E. Latham, 'Inquisitions post mortem', in *Amateur Historian* i (1953), 77–81
33. CCA DY 13. The deeds recorded in the exemplification are undated; approximate dates can be reached from the names of the donors and through analysis of the witness lists. There is a house called Notley at Church End (the only stone building other than the church) which is believed locally to have been the lodgings of the Notley canon, charged with pastoral care of the village.
34. CCA MS Estates 8 ff. 5–14
35. *Oxford Dictionary of national biography* (2004)
36. A map of Hillesden was evidently drawn up to accompany the terrier (CCA MS Estates 8, f.5) but all attempts to track it down have failed. Two other Kersey maps are held by the Essex Record Office – *Catalogue of maps in the Essex Record Office* (1947).
37. CCA MS Estates 8, f.8
38. H.L. Gray, *English field systems* (1915), 63, 70, and 76
39. CCA MS Estates 8, f.14; G. Eland, 'A Hillesden account-book, 1661–7', in *Records of Buckinghamshire* xi (1921), 137
40. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.11, 12 & 13
41. CCA MS Estates 8, f.13
42. CCA MS Estates 8, f.15
43. Eland (1921), 142
44. CCA MS Estates 8, f.12–13
45. CCA MS Estates 8, f.3. Alexander Denton held the estate between 1633 and his death in 1645. He died in the Tower where he had been imprisoned after the siege of Hillesden House by parliamentary forces in 1644.
46. BRO M32/1 (microfilm of a terrier which now forms part of the Holkham manuscript collection)
47. A. Mawer, *The chief elements used in English place-names* (1930), 57; J. Field, 67; Baines (1982), 20–2
48. CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1; Baines (1982), 22
49. National Monuments Record (hereafter NMR); film 1165, frames 214, 230, 233; Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography (hereafter CUCAP); film LU 31–34 (1953)
50. Baines (1982), 22
51. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.5–14
52. BRO M32/1
53. Baines (1982), 26–7; BRO M32/1
54. White Kennet, *Parochial Antiquities* (1695), 155; CCA DY13; CCA MS Estates 8, f.35
55. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.5–14; BRO M32/1
56. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.3 & 34
57. CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763)
58. *The Buckinghamshire Domesday* (Alecto edition 1988), 146^v and 147^v
59. CCA MS Estates 8, f. 33
60. CCA MS Estates 8, f.15
61. G. Eland, *In Bucks* (1923), 35–6.
62. The field Town Close was known as Wood End Leys in 1763. However, an archaeological survey in 1977 suggested that the earthworks of the moated site were probably associated with a hollow way and house-platforms – Buckinghamshire County Museum, card 2312.
63. *The Buckinghamshire Domesday* (Alecto edition 1988), 146^v and 147^v
64. A virgate of land was granted to found a chapel (see DY13). The presence of a chapel dedicated to St Margaret is suggested in a document in the Christ Church archives which appears to be a summary of an Act of Parliament dated '17Car'. This Act could have been that passed on 21 July 1641 permitting Alexander Denton to sell lands for the payment of debts and for the preferment of his younger children. See *Journals of the House of Commons* ii, 219.
65. VCH *Bucks* iv (1927), 126. Hillesden parish church is thought to have been rebuilt in 1493.
66. NMR identifier 879743 no.SP 62 NE 17; identifier 49747 no. SP 62 NE; CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763); CCA xlviii.c.7 (1847)
67. CCA MS Estates 8, f.1
68. TNA PROB11/80, ff.266–7 Will of William Staunton dated 26 August 34 Eliz. I [1592] and

- proven 27 November 1592
69. TNA PROB 11/168, ff.150–1 Will of William Paxton, yeoman, dated 11 January 1628 and proven 26 June 1635; TNA PROB 11/168, f.145 Will of John Butcher, husbandman, dated 27 February 1630 and proven 9 June 1635
 70. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.5 and 24
 71. I.S. Leadam (ed.), *The domesday of inclosures, 1517–1518* (1897, new ed. 1971), 576; M. Reed, 'Enclosure in north Buckinghamshire, 1500–1750' in *Agricultural History Review* xxxii (1984), 133–34
 72. CCA MS Estates 8, f.3
 73. CCA MS Estates 8, f.79^v
 74. BRO M32/1; CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763). The establishment of a warren in the medieval period would have involved the enclosure of the area to protect the rabbits and to prevent escape.
 75. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.3 and 4
 76. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.166–178
 77. Broad (2004), 53
 78. Broad, 'The Verneys as enclosing landlords, 1600–1800', in Chartres and Hey (eds.), *English rural society, 1500–1800* (1990), 32
 79. *Journals of the House of Commons* ii, 219; *House of Lords Calendar 1661–2*, 1566
 80. PRO, *Calendar of the proceedings of the committee for compounding, etc., 1643–1660* i (1889), 67
 81. C. Clay, 'Landlords and estate management in England', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales, 1640–1750*, vii (1985), 123
 82. Broad, 'Sir Ralph Verney and his estates, 1630–96', (DPhil thesis, Oxford 1973), 20
 83. Broad (1973), 66; Broad (2004), 38
 84. Broad (1990), 33; Broad (2004), 71
 85. Clay (1985), 132
 86. Broad (1973), 80; Broad (1990), 34
 87. Broad (1990), 33–6; Clay (1985), 146
 88. Broad (1973), 161; CCA MS Estates 8, f.75
 89. CCA MS Estates 8, f.1; Broad (1990), 31
 90. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.5–14; BRO M32/1; CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763)
 91. CCA MS Estates 8, f.35. Phillips himself must have been a boy of 10 or 11 at the time, but his father was a tenant.
 92. M. Reed, 'Enclosure in north Buckinghamshire, 1500–1750', in *Agricultural History Review* xxii (1984), 138
 93. *Journals of the House of Commons* iii, 374
 94. Sir Alexander died soon after the siege on 1 January 1645 whilst still in the Tower; VCH Bucks iv (1927), 174
 95. Broad (1973), 17; Clay (1985), 130; J. Broad, 'Gentry finances and the Civil War: the case of the Buckinghamshire Verneys', in *Economic History Review* xxxii (1979), 190
 96. *Calendar of the proceedings of the committee for compounding, etc., 1643–1660*, iv (1892), 2878
 97. CCA MS Estates 8, f.75; TNA PROB11/291, ff.166–174. Will of Sir Edmund Denton dated 17 October 1657 and proven 4 May 1659
 98. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.75–86. The agreement between the Dean and Chapter was confirmed in an Exchequer decree of 5 July 1721 of which there is a copy in CCA (MS Estates 8, ff.81–6)
 99. BRO M32/1
 100. CCA MS Estates 8, f.78
 101. CCA MS Estates 8, f.24
 102. TNA PROB 11/291, ff.166–174
 103. CCA MS Estates 8, f.24
 104. BRO M32/1
 105. Broad (1973), 161–2; Broad (1990), 33
 106. W.E. Tate & M.E. Turner, *A domesday of English enclosure acts and awards* (1978), 66–8; M. Reed, 'Enclosure in north Buckinghamshire, 1500–1750', in *Agricultural History Review* xxxii (1984), 144
 107. Reed (1984), 139–41; TNA PROB11/291, ff.166–174
 108. J. Broad, 'The Verneys as enclosing landlords, 1600–1800', in J. Chartres and D. Hey (eds.), *English rural society, 1500–1800* (1990), 28
 109. Broad (1990), 30–1
 110. Broad (1990), 34
 111. See chapter 2, page 24; Broad (1990), 32
 112. J. Broad, 'Sir Ralph Verney and his estates, 1630–96' (DPhil thesis, Oxford 1973), 163
 113. Broad (1990), 32; Broad (1973), 161
 114. Broad (1990), 35–7
 115. Broad (1990), 45–7
 116. Broad (1990), 49–51
 117. Broad (1990), 52–3
 118. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.5–14
 119. CCA MS Estates 8, f.5 (my italics). Before enclosure, the nine Christ Church tenants held a total of eight yardlands. By this time, the size of a yardland varied considerably, and

- rights of common were evidently the distinguishing feature between holdings. The tenants' holdings ranged in size from Roger Watts' 1½ yardlands (c.28 acres) to the ½ yardlands held by Agnes Middle, Robert Brasshead, and Thomas Dent (13–15 acres). An additional yardland was pasture and meadow allotments (CCA MS Estates 8, f.3).
120. CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763)
 121. CCA MS Estates 8, ff.24 & 32
 122. CCA MS Estates 8, f.111; Elizabeth Coke was the mother of the agriculturalist, Coke of Norfolk.
 123. CUCAP LU-32-4 (1953); CUCAP RC8-HI 144–5, RC8-HH 253–5; RC8-HI 167–8 (1985)
 124. The exception is Stocking Farm recorded in the terrier as occupying the same site it does today.
 125. CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763)
 126. BRO D/X 591 (acc. AR25/77); G. Eland, 'Hillesden account-book, 1661–7', in *Records of Buckinghamshire* xi (1922), 195–8
 127. Broad (1973), 163
 128. CCA xlvi.7 (1847)
 129. CCA MS Estates 8, f.31. Alexander Denton to James Brooks, Christ Church Chapter clerk (undated).
 130. CCA MS Estates 8, f.35. This document is undated but is endorsed 'What Philips said to Mr. Brooks as to the college property at Hillesden'. James Brooks was Student and Chapter Clerk at Christ Church between 1719 and 1728. By this time, Phillips would have been at least 78 – he was born 10 October 1641.
 131. E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The population history of England, 1541–1871* (1981), pullout 1
 132. M. Drake, *Population studies from parish registers* (1982), x–xxiii
 133. Figures (using standard multipliers where applicable) derived from: J. Broad (1990), 46; A.C. Chibnall and A. Vere Woodman (eds.), *Subsidy roll for Buckinghamshire, 1524* (1950), 64; *Compton Census*; I.F.W. Beckett, *The Buckinghamshire posse comitatus, 1798* (1985), 113; Browne Willis, *History and antiquities of Buckingham* (1755), 196; J. Broad (ed.), *Buckinghamshire dissent and parish life, 1669–1712*, (1993), 82–3; VCH, *Bucks.*, ii, (1908), 96–101
 134. Broad (1990), 47–8
 135. Broad (1990), 47
 136. CCA MS Estates 8, f.149. Letter from the Revd William Eyre to Dr John Bull (Christ Church treasurer) dated 2 January 1841
 137. Broad (1990), 51; Hillesden parish registers BRO PR102/1/1 and PR102/1/2
 138. John Middleton, for example, was recorded as a husbandman in 1646 but as labourer in 1655 (BRO PR102/1/1)
 139. Broad (1990), 53
 140. The first record of the Friday family is the baptism of Robert Friday, jr. on 18 May 1662
 141. Eland (1921–3), 137, 143, 188–9
 142. Eland (1921), 142
 143. BRO M32/1; CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763)
 144. B.K. Roberts, *The making of the English village* (1987), 98–9
 145. Broad (1990), 27–53; Reed (1984), 141–2
 146. Broad (1990), 27; Reed (1984), 143
 147. W.E. Tate & M.E. Turner, *A domesday of English enclosure acts and awards*, (1978), 66–8; M. Reed, 'Enclosure in north Buckinghamshire, 1500–1750', in *Agricultural History Review* xxxii (1984), 133–4, 143–4
 148. TNA PROB11/80, ff.266–7; CCA MS Estates 8, f.35
 149. Broad (1990), 33
 150. CCA Maps Bucks. Hillesden 1 (1763)
 151. BRO D/X 591 (acc. AR25/77); Reed (1984), 142
 152. Broad (1990), 46
 153. Broad (1990), 46–7
 154. Broad (1990), 39–41
 155. Broad (1990), 39–41
 156. Reed (1984), 142
 157. Beckett (1985), 113
 158. R.C. Allen, *Enclosure and the yeoman* (1992), 31–3. Allen defines the south Midlands as an area of nearly 1¼ million acres covering much of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, much of Warwickshire, Rutland, north Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, and small portions of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire (excluding the Chilterns, Cotswolds, Arden, and Charnwood).